

HOT POTATO

We are supposed to cut-weld preparations
along cracks in diffusion-bonded wing carry-thru sections
found piled outside Department 88,
so that welders can fill the cracks with titanium weld.

The Air Force wants the wing carry-thru sections NOW,
but we keep asking questions
about the unclear weld preparation blueprints.

Our foremen try to end our questions
by reading the blueprints upside-down
and giving us obviously bad advice.
They are beginning to avoid us
by hiding in the offices or walking laps
around the inside of the building.
When we press them, they refer us to supervisors
who shake their heads and refer us to manufacturing
engineers who shake their heads and carry the blueprints
into engineering offices which send the blueprints back
to us unchanged or even more unclear.

"JUST CUT IT!" the foremen scream at us.

We are beginning to feel uneasy.
We are beginning to wonder about those jokes
about the wings falling off of the bombers.

For the first time in our careers, Goodstone Aircraft
Company has made us feel like responsible adults.
There must be something seriously wrong.

THE STUD

He had worked out at Gold's Gym
until he could bench-press 450 pounds.

He walked around the machine shop
waving a 50-pound lead hammer above his head
with one hand,
and his hammer blows
echoed off the machine shop walls
like gunshots.

Then he started talking
about how much he liked to fuck
his boyfriend.

For the first time in the machine shop's 20-year history,
no one was telling any faggot jokes.